

# Elite Opponents

## Changing Types To Get What You Want

*Creature Incarnations*  
By Robert Wiese



Last year, *Creature Incarnations* featured a column in April called *Creatures That Cannot Be*. The response to it was huge, and you can expect to see another one in April. One of the things it showed was that you like creatures that are not allowed, or at least that seem not allowed. Sometimes, you can make a creature that you have envisioned by playing with templates, and that is what this month's column is about. Specifically, it presents some examples where I use one template solely to change a creature's type so that it qualifies for another template. For example, say you want an undead outsider. Normally you can't make one, because undead templates don't apply to outsiders. However, if you can change the outsider into some other type, then you can apply the undead template. This results in making the creature different than the base creature, but some of the base creature always carries through. This way, please, and watch your step as we view some marvelous creatures that almost qualify for our April feature.



### Half-Troll Manticore Lycanthrope

A manticore is a magical beast, but a half-troll manticore is a giant. Giants can catch lycanthropy, so here is a manticore were-tyrannosaurus (sort of). It's really nasty, too. The half-troll template, a very useful one, is published in [Fiend Folio](#), and the rest you can get from the [Monster Manual](#). The base stats follow, with modifications below that for hybrid and animal forms.

This is perhaps the weirdest creature I have made yet for this column. A manticore is four-legged, but since it's a half-troll it could be two-legged. Let's make it a two-legged troll-like creature with a tawny body, a warty long-nosed manticore-like face, and a spiky manticore tail. And wings. Don't forget that it has wings. That's its giant form. In animal form it looks like a tyrannosaurus, though with something about it that suggests a troll. In its hybrid form, it is a bipedal winged creature with the head of a t-rex. The upper part of its body is patterned like a t-rex, and that merges into more tawny fur. It has the spiky tail, and its hair is stringy.

You could also make it four-legged like a manticore with a warty face and long stringy black hair. This version's hybrid form looks vaguely like a manticore with a t-rex head. I like the first version better.

#### Half-Troll Manticore Were-Tyrannosaurus (Giant Form) CR 11

NE **Large giant** (shapechanger)

**Init** +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +17, Spot +21

**Languages** --

**AC** 24, touch 12, **flat-footed** 21

(-1 size, +3 Dex, +12 natural)

**hp** 246 (24 HD); fast heal 5

**Fort** 21, **Ref** +17, **Will** +12

**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 50 ft. (clumsy); Flyby Attack

**Melee** 2 claws +26 each (2d4+8) and

bite +24 (1d8+4) or

**Ranged** 6 spikes +22 each (1d8+4)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Base Atk** +19; **Grp** +31

**Atk Options** rend (2d6+12)

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**Abilities** Str 26, Dex 17, Con 25, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 7

**SQ** alternate form, tyrannosaurus empathy

**Feats** Alertness, Flyby Attack, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will[B], Multiattack, Run, Toughness (3), Track[B], Weapon Focus (spikes)

**Skills** Listen +17, Spot +21, Survival +3

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**Spikes (Ex)** With a snap of its tail, a half-troll manticore were-tyrannosaurus can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The creature can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

**Rend (Ex)** If a half-troll hits with two or more claw attacks against the same opponent, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+12 points of damage.

**Alternate Form (Su)** A half-troll manticore were-tyrannosaurus can shift into tyrannosaurus form. It does not assume the ability scores of the animal, but instead adds the animal's physical ability score modifiers to its own ability scores. A lycanthrope also can assume a bipedal hybrid form with prehensile hands and animalistic features.

**Tyrannosaurus Empathy (Ex)** In any form, a half-troll manticore were-tyrannosaurus can communicate and empathize with normal or dire tyrannosauruses. This gives them a +4 racial bonus on checks when influencing the animal's attitude and allows the communication of simple concepts and (if the animal is friendly) commands, such as "friend," "foe," "flee," and "attack."

For hybrid forms, make the following changes to the above stat block.

### **Half-Troll Manticore Were-Tyrannosaurus (Hybrid Form) CR 11**

NE Huge giant (shapechanger)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +15, Spot +19

**Languages** --

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**AC** 24, touch 12, flat-footed 21

(-2 size, +4 Dex, +12 natural)

**hp** 246 (24 HD); fast heal 5; **DR** 5/silver

**Fort** +26, **Ref** +18, **Will** +12

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**Melee** 2 claws +34 each (2d4+17) and

bite +32 (3d6+8) or

**Ranged** 6 spikes +21 each (1d8+8)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +19; **Grp** +44

**Atk Options** rend (2d6+25)

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**Abilities** Str 44, Dex 19, Con 38, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 7

**Skills** Listen +15, Spot +19, Survival +3

For animal (tyrannosaurus) form, make these changes to the giant form stat block.

### Half-Troll Manticore Were-Tyrannosaurus (Animal Form) CR 11

NE Huge giant (shapechanger)

**Init** +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +15, Spot +19

**Languages** --

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**AC** 19, touch 12, flat-footed 15

(-2 size, +4 Dex, +7 natural)

**hp** 246 (24 HD); fast heal 5; **DR** 5/silver

**Fort** +26, **Ref** +18, **Will** +12

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**Speed** 40 ft. (8 squares)

**Melee** 2 claws +34 each (2d4+17) and bite +32 (3d6+8) or

**Ranged** 6 spikes +21 each (1d8+8)

**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

**Base Atk** +19; **Grp** +44

**Atk Options** improved grab, swallow whole

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**Abilities** Str 44, Dex 19, Con 38, Int 5, Wis 14, Cha 7

**Skills** Listen +15, Spot +19, Survival +3

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**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability, a tyrannosaurus must hit an opponent of up to one size smaller with its bite attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can try to swallow the foe the following round.

**Swallow Whole (Ex)** A tyrannosaurus can try to swallow a grabbed opponent of up to two sizes smaller by making a successful grapple check. The swallowed creature takes 2d8+8 points of bludgeoning damage and 8 points of acid damage per round from the tyrannosaurus's gizzard. A swallowed creature can cut its way out by using a light slashing or piercing weapon to deal 25 points of damage to the gizzard (AC 12). Once the creature exits, muscular action closes the hole; another swallowed opponent must cut its own way out. A Huge tyrannosaurus's gizzard can hold 2 Medium, 8 Small, 32 Tiny, or 128 Diminutive or smaller opponents.

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### Half-Golem (Iron) Hivemind Manticore

Okay, this creature might be even weirder in appearance than the half-troll manticore above. Manticores are magical beasts, but the half-golem template from [Monster Manual II](#) causes a type change to construct when the Will save is failed. Constructs can have the hivemind template from [Dungeonscape](#).

This creature has the body and head of a manticore, along with its wings and tail. Its four legs have been replaced by iron legs. A swarm of spiders has infested the creature and crawl across its surface constantly, making it look like it has a moving carpet on its skin.

### Half-Golem (Iron) Hivenest (Spider Swarm) Manticore CR 8

NE Large construct (swarm)

**Init** +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent, tremorsense 30 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +9

**Languages** --

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**AC** 21, touch 10, flat-footed 20

(-1 size, +1 Dex, +11 natural)

**hp** 63 (6 HD); **DR** 15/adamantine

**Immune** magic, mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, necromancy effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability damage, ability drain, fatigue, exhaustion, energy drain, effects requiring Fort save unless effect works on objects, massive damage, raising, resurrection

**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

**Weakness** vulnerability to rust

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**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares; cannot run), fly 50 ft. (clumsy); Flyby Attack

**Melee** 2 claws +15 each (2d4+10) and

bite +13 (1d8+5) or

**Ranged** 6 spikes +6 each (1d8+5)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Base Atk** +6; **Grp** +20

**Atk Options** breath weapon, hivenest attack (2d6 plus poison), spikes

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**Abilities** Str 30, Dex 13, Con --, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 3

**SQ** construct traits, hivedeath, hivenest distraction, single actions only, vermin traits

**Feats** Flyby Attack, Multiattack, Track[B], Weapon Focus (spikes)

**Skills** Listen +5, Spot +9, Survival +2 (+7 tracking by scent)

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**Spikes (Ex)** With a snap of its tail, a half-golem hivenest manticores can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The half-golem hivenest manticores can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

**Hivenest Attack (Ex)** Any creature struck by one or more of the half-golem hivenest manticores's natural weapon attacks also takes 1d6 points of damage from the spider swarm as if the base swarm had ended its turn occupying the same space as the creature, plus poison (Injury, Fortitude DC 11, initial and secondary damage 1d3 Str). Any effect, such as damage reduction, that reduces or negates swarm attack damage is applied separately to the natural weapon attack and to the swarm attack. If the swarm attack of the base swarm delivers poison, acid, or some other special effect, a successful hivenest attack delivers the same effect.

**Hivenest Distraction (Ex)** Any living creature vulnerable to a hivenest attack's damage that begins its turn in a square adjacent to a hivenest monster is nauseated for 1 round. A Fortitude save (DC 11) negates the effect. Spellcasting or concentrating on spells while adjacent to a hivenest monster requires a Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level). Using skills that involve patience and concentration requires a successful DC 20 Concentration check.

**Hivedeath (Ex)** If the half-golem hivenest manticores is reduced to 0 hit points, it is destroyed but the single spider swarm that nests within it is released and immediately placed in the space previously occupied by the hivenest monster. The swarm has full hit points, regardless of the damage taken by the hivenest monster, and acts independently of any control the half-golem hivenest manticores was under. Effects that completely destroy the hivenest monster's body (such as *disintegrate* or *implosion*) prevent the hivedeath effect.

**Immunity to Magic (Ex)** A half-golem hivenest manticores is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below. A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows a half-golem hivenest manticores (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw. A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any *slow* effect on the half-golem hivenest manticores and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. For example, a half-golem hivenest manticores hit by a *fireball* gains back 6 hit points if the damage total is 18 points. A half-golem hivenest manticores gets no saving throw against fire effects. A half-golem hivenest manticores is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

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## Half-Vampire Tauric Elf-Manticore

This month seems to be a quest to outdo the last monster in weirdness. The half-vampire template from [Libris Mortis](#) requires a humanoid or monstrous humanoid. The manticore is a magical beast. A template that changes a creature's type to monstrous humanoid is the tauric template from *Monster Manual II*. So I kind of had to chop off the manticore's head to make it a half-vampire. This creature has two inherited templates, but the tauric template is more a monster-making template than something you think of a monster being born with. A centaur doesn't start with a template, after all.

The monstrous vampire template from *Ghostwalk* would have let me make a manticore vampire directly, but not a half-vampire.

This creature has the torso, head, and arms of a high elf, and the lower body of a manticore (including the wings and tail). The half-vampire template changes its appearance very little, except to make it a little more handsome and give it a pale complexion and pointy teeth. It is a loner, unless it can find a place where anyone is welcomed. Its bitterness about life has turned it evil, and it prowls for victims wherever it can find them.

### Half-Vampire Tauric Elf-Manticore CR 5

LE Large monstrous humanoid

**Init** +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +9, Spot +13

**Languages** Common, Elven

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**AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 17

(-1 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural)

**hp** 59 (7 HD); fast heal 1; **DR** 5/silver or magic

**Immune** sleep effects

**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5

**Fort** +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +1; +2 against enchantment spells or effects

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**Speed** 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 50 ft. (clumsy); Flyby Attack

**Melee** mwk longsword +13/+8 (2d6+6) and

2 claws +9 (2d4+3) or

slam +12 (1d8+6) or

**Ranged** 6 spikes +9 each (1d8+3) or

mwk composite longbow [+5 Str] +9 (2d6+6)

**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

**Base Atk** +7; **Grp** +17

**Atk Options** spikes

**Special Actions** children of the night

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**Abilities** Str 22, Dex 17, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 10

**SQ** elf traits, find secret doors

**Feats** Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (spikes)

**Skills** Bluff +2, Hide +3, Jump +6 Listen +9, Move Silently +5, Search +5, Spot +13, Survival +2

**Possessions** masterwork large longsword, masterwork large composite longbow [+5 Str], quiver of 20 arrows

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**Spikes (Ex)** With a snap of its tail, a half-vampire tauric elf-manticore can loose a volley of six spikes as a standard action (make an attack roll for each spike). This attack has a range of 180 feet with no range increment. All targets must be within 30 feet of each other. The half-vampire tauric elf-manticore can launch only twenty-four spikes in any 24-hour period.

**Children of the Night (Su)** Once per day, this creature can call forth 1d4 rat swarms, 1d3 bat swarms, or a pack of 1d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the half-vampire for up

to 1 hour.

**Find Secret Doors (Ex)** An elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check to notice it as if she were actively looking for it.

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### About the Author

**Robert Wiese** has been playing **D&D** since 1978 after he watched a game played in the car on the way home from a Boy Scouts meeting. He was fascinated, and delved into this strange world of dragons and magic and sourcebooks. Years later, he was hired to edit tournaments for the **RPGA** Network, and from there progressed to running the network after his boss was assassinated in the great Christmas purge of 1996. Times were tough, but he persevered and brought the **RPGA** into a shining new era. Eventually he met a girl who liked to play **D&D** too, and he left Renton for the warmth and casinos of Reno, Nevada. Now, he works in the Pharmacology department of UNR studying mouse foot muscles and the effects of RF emissions on same. He spends as much time as possible with his wife Rhonda and year-old son Owen.

Over the course of his career, he wrote over sixty tournament adventures for the **RPGA** , and he continues to inflict his creativity on you through this website. He hopes that you find his little creations useful, or at least amusing.

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